Application for Student Body President, 2022-2023

Please note that this application will be made available to the general student body for their consideration in choosing with whom to cast their vote. Questions are designed to help candidates reflect on their character, calling, and competencies as they apply to leadership at Messiah University. Please limit answers to a maximum of 250 words.

Name: Pauline Deutcheu
Running Mate: Mireliz Bermudez
Email Address: pd1180@messiah.edu
Expected Graduation: May 2023
Major(s): Mechanical Engineering
Minor(s): Philosophy

1. Why do you want to serve as Student Body President? In your own words, what purpose do you believe the position should serve on campus?

The purpose of the Student Body President is to be the bridge between the students and the administration. By connecting with students and clubs across campus, the President will be able to bring their concerns to the administration and help to shape the culture of campus to better reflect the dreams of its students.

I am passionate about creating a campus that fosters a sense of belonging for all its students. Students should not be intimidated by the challenges they face on campus but should instead be empowered to take them head on. I want to serve as the Student Body President because this position is designed for students to lead the charge in pushing Messiah to continuously improve itself, specifically I want to improve Messiahs efforts in meeting the needs of its underrepresented students. I believe I can do well in this position and after lengthy conversations with friends and mentors, as well as in prayer, I believe I should take the opportunity to run.

2. In your opinion, what is the most pressing issue currently facing Messiah University and how would you address it?
I feel this campus is missing a sense of connection, which has contributed to students lacking a sense of belonging in the community and struggling to find their place. Messiah champions community but in recent years has lost its focus due to the mitigation of COVID-19.

To address the issue, I would first continue the momentum of reconciliation to combat the lack of connection that smaller student populations have with the broader community. Collaborative events between departments and student groups have granted me the opportunity to hear the concerns and struggles of groups that I am not part of. I have since seen some of those concerns addressed and have been more aware of how my actions affect those groups. It's important to continue these discussions as it allows for more students to be aware of how they can best help others. We should make a strong effort to not let this reconciliation theme be bound to 2021-2022 but push toward a lifelong commitment to reconciliation.

Second, I would reconnect Messiah with the surrounding community. By helping clubs find ways to host events in partnership with local businesses, students will have more participation and exploration opportunities, connecting them with their environment. Some of my favorite Messiah memories were thanks to these types of partnerships. My friends and I now go to Tacos Mi Tierra in Harrisburg because of a partnership with La Alianza Latina, and I have countless stories of the adventures that follow from spending the day in Harrisburg.

3. Discuss 2-3 other agenda items that you would like to address as Student Body President.

I want students to reconnect with their space more by increasing outdoor seating by adding picnic tables to the green space to encourage students to reconnect with their space and utilize their environment for community building. I plan on partnering with the Banquet Initiative and the Office of Sustainability to ensure that any planning for this space is accessible to all students and sustainable as possible.

Many first-generation students are unfortunately not equipped with the knowledge to navigate the complex world of financial aid, loans, and credit. They are often working throughout the school year to make ends meet. Mireliz and I, being first-generation students, want to create a program to help students deal with the financial stress of college; this program will focus on supporting mental well-being while giving students tips and tools to help them navigate future years of college.

Students have reached out to me to offer ideas of their own, which I plan on looking into. Many students have busy course loads making it difficult for them to go to chapel during the week. They are trying to maximize the time they have during the week to complete their work. The idea to resolve this issue is to offer a Sunday morning chapel. It's also beneficial for students
who are having a hard time finding a home church near Messiah but are still wanting to spend their Sunday morning in fellowship and spiritual formation.

4. What previous leadership positions have you held on campus? How have these or other experiences deepened your thinking about effective leadership?

This school year will be my second year as a Martin Scholar Mentor. In this position I have had to be extremely flexible as COVID-19 continues to create challenges for mentoring. We have had to adopt creative and alternatives ways to connect with the first-year Martin Scholars cohort; this has demonstrated that by having an open mind and a determined team, no idea is too far out of a reach. The Martin Scholar cohorts compose of diverse individuals and being able to get to know them have opened my eyes to the needs of various types of students. The knowledge I gained from them have increased my cultural awareness which is a crucial characteristic of a student leader.

Last school year I served as a Resident Assistant in Naugle and this school year I am the Senior Resident Assistant of Naugle. Being a RA during the time of extreme enforcement of COVID-19 mitigation policies was difficult, but I have had an abundance of practice in confrontation as RAs were tasked with enforcing masking and social distancing policies across campus. That year showed me the importance of a calm demeanor in communication. Students responded well when I was calm and gave clear explanations for the policies. This year as the SRA, I am the leader of my staff, which has helped me grow in being a leader among leaders. Through helping my staff reach their goals as RAs, I have a better understanding of how to leverage strengths in others.

5. What does effective leadership look like to you and how do you plan to achieve that with your running mate?

Effective leadership includes accountability and willingness to grow. These two qualities ensure that the leaders are receptive to feedback and constructive criticism from the students.

Mireliz and I have spent some time clearly defining our platform and all of our proposed actions stem from that. We will be able to stay accountable to our goals by checking in and gathering feedback from the student groups we hope to help in order to progress with our goals; the students’ feedback is the most valuable metric we will use. Accountability is important because it eliminates time spent on distracting activities and other unproductive behavior. If we are not meeting our goals it will result in another year of an unconnected Messiah which will be unacceptable.
There are many things that Mireliz and I do not know but we are both continuously learning and are committed to gaining the knowledge necessary to fulfill and extend beyond the standards of these roles. A willingness to grow keeps humility at the forefront and arrogance away. This year, Mireliz and I both joined the Senate. I served as the Student Representative for Residence Life and was a part of both the extended and primary forums and Mireliz served as a senator on the Council of Student Engagement. Throughout the course of the year, I went from knowing nothing to learning quite a bit about the inner workings of SGA, participating in creating new proposals, and passing governance amendments.

6. The demanding role of Student Body President requires considerable strength in the following areas: organizational skills, attention to detail, flexibility, diplomacy, compassion and open-mindedness. Please choose a few of these areas and speak to your aptitude or qualifications.

Organizational skills: I have been successful at prioritizing my time among the different responsibilities I have as the SRA of Naugle. I demonstrate the ability to create detailed calendars and checklists, design professional development programs, lead parts of my weekly staff meetings, and foster healthy community relationships on my floor. My time management skills have helped me complete all of these tasks and more by their respective deadlines.

Flexibility: In recent years I have tried to live by this motto, "Flex and Flow". Its main idea is to recognize your main goal when planning a trip/event, the plan may go awry but the most important thing is that the goal is met. This mindset has helped me manage stress because I do not get worked up over insignificant details. I plan to continue to "Flex and Flow" as there will inevitably be deviations the original plans.

Compassion: My father has always taught me the importance of lending a helping hand when you are able to. He immigrated to the US shortly after I was born and was able to scrape by due to the courtesy and kind hearts of the people he first met. Eventually he was able to save enough to sponsor my mother and me. I would not be in the US if it was not for the compassionate hearts of the people my Dad encountered. I have always held compassion as a core value in my life because lending a helping hand can be life changing.

7. If elected, how will your character and Christian faith influence your leadership?

During my time at Messiah I have learned so much about different faith practices and have seen the beauty in the various styles of worship while learning to appreciate their differences. Through those differences I have noticed that love is at the center of it all, and it is this love that my own theology stems from. In general and through my leadership, show love to all people
from all walks of life. I strive to learn their stories because I believe to truly love someone you need to know who they are and where they come from.

My faith is influenced by participating in social justice through practical action. I believe that as Christians we are called to meet the needs of the marginalized groups in our society. Luke 4:18-19 says, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor". Additionally, scripture describes compassionate action by using the Greek word “splagchnizomai,” meaning to be moved so deeply by something that you feel it in the pit of your stomach. I believe we should be so deeply moved by the injustices in our world and that should motivate us to do something about it. In my leadership, I have the opportunity to mobilize the necessary resources.

Applications must be submitted in full, along with a current resume in PDF form, to sgatreasurer@messiah.edu before 11:59pm on February 14th. No late applications will be considered. A completed petition form bearing the names and signatures of 200 current Messiah University student endorsements must be also slid under the door of the SGA Office (Larsen 201) before the same deadline.